

Essay #2: Interpreting *Into the Wild*

WRITING SITUATION:

This assignment involves some analysis and interpretation, and you will be using two of Henry David Thoreau's essays to help explain the book, *Into the Wild*.

WRITING PROMPT:

1. Chris McCandless is a complex character whose motives are difficult to explain. One thing for certain that we learn from McCandless's journal entries, books he read, and ideas he shared with others is that he was influenced by Thoreau's writings.

In a well-written, logically structured essay use both "Civil Disobedience," and "Life Without Principle" to interpret and explain how/why McCandless lived the last several adult years of his life. To structure your essay, organize your paragraphs around key ideas that Thoreau advocates in the essay you have chosen. These will be your generalizations out of which you build paragraphs with supporting evidence from *Into the Wild*.

Overall, your essay must attempt to answer the question of what was the purpose of McCandless's life.

REQUIREMENTS

- **Page length:** Your essay should be 3-5 typed double-spaced pages.
- **Writing mode:** expository/analytical/interpretive
- **Audience:** You are writing to peers, college-educated folks. Assume your audience is familiar with the texts you are using.
- **Purpose:** First, you want to practice asserting your opinion on one of the topics. Next, your goal is to convince a reasonable reader to believe in your opinion. Know what it is you wish to accomplish.
- **SAE:** Remember, your paper must follow the basic conventions of Standard American written English (correct mechanics, usage, grammar, spelling, punctuation, sentence structure, and so forth).
- **REMINDER:** This essay must be written in the third person, so you **may not** use "you" or "I" at all in this assignment. Be sure to use the present tense whenever you discuss what authors of outside sources say. Also make sure you introduce the author and title of any outside sources in the correct manner.
- **USING AN OUTSIDE SOURCE:** This paper requires that you cite from an essay and a book. Consequently you must use the MLA in-text parenthetical citation method and add a Works Cited page at the end of your essay. Remember that citations take three forms: direct quotation, paraphrase, summary.

PEER CRITIQUE

ROUGH DRAFT DUE _____

FINAL DRAFT DUE _____